

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

5 A system for communicating with a medical device implanted in an ambulatory patient and for locating the patient in order to selectively monitor device function, alter device operating parameters and modes and provide emergency assistance to and communications with a patient. The implanted device includes a telemetry transceiver for communicating data and operating instructions between the implanted device and an external patient communications control device that is either worn by or located in proximity to the patient within the implanted device tranceiving range. The control device preferably includes a communication link with a remote medical support network, a global positioning satellite receiver for receiving positioning data identifying the global position of the control device, and a patient activated link for permitting patient initiated personal communication with the medical support network. A system controller in the control device controls data and voice communications for selectively transmitting patient initiated personal communications and global positioning data to the medical support network, for initiating telemetry out of data and operating commands from the implanted device and transmission of the same to the medical support network, and for receiving and initiating re-programming of the implanted device operating modes and parameters in response to instructions received from the medical support network. The communications link between the medical support network and the patient communications control device may comprise a world wide satellite network, hard-wired telephone network, a cellular telephone network or other personal communications system. Methods and apparatae are also described that enhance the ability of the medical system to find patients and to get reports on patient and medical device status, and even update medical device programming using such facilities, and others described in detail within.